

1.1 DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF PROJECT

The IL 336 project is a re-evaluation of a corridor study for a modern transportation facility in west-central Illinois. The project area is located in west-central Illinois and covers portions of Peoria, Fulton, and McDonough Counties (see Exhibit 1-1). The study area extends from the west side of Peoria westward to the vicinity of US 67 near Macomb, a distance of about 60 miles. The eastern half of the study area is bounded, approximately, on the south by the Illinois River. The western half of the southern boundary extends due west from about the intersection of US 24 and US 136. On the north, the study boundary generally lies parallel to and just north of IL 116 to Farmington, then just west of IL 78 to IL 9, then just north of IL 9 to US 67. Other state routes in the study area are IL 41, IL 95, and IL 97.

The study area is primarily rural agricultural, with several cities and villages. The cities near the termini of the project area, Macomb (population 18,558) and Peoria (population 112,936), are the economic and population centers for McDonough and Peoria Counties. Canton (population 15,288), near the middle of the project area, is the economic and population center for Fulton County. Smaller communities located in the corridor study area include Bartonville (6,310), Bushnell (3,221), Farmington (2,554), Lewistown (2,522), Bellevue (1,887), Cuba (1,418), and Glasford (1,076). There are many villages in the area with populations under 500.

1.2 HISTORY OF PROJECT

The IL 336 project is the culmination of a long planning process. For the past four decades, the State of Illinois, civic leaders, local agencies, and citizen groups have expressed the need for an improved highway system in west-central Illinois. Since the early 1960s, planning efforts have been directed toward providing the necessary linkages from western Illinois communities to the larger cities within the region. In 1969, the Illinois General Assembly passed legislation making possible major highway improvements statewide. An important part of that legislation was the Supplemental Freeway System. One of the freeways included in the enabling legislation, Supplemental Freeway F-7 (later known as FA 407), extended from Peoria west to Quincy (Exhibit 1-2).

After passing the legislation, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) prepared a Corridor Study for FA 407 from Peoria to IL 61 west of Tennessee, IL in McDonough County. The corridor study was completed in 1970. The study evaluated three alternate routes, A, B, and C, from Peoria to Macomb, and resulted in the selection of Alternate A. These corridors, slightly modified primarily to include a logical terminus at Macomb, are shown in Exhibit 1-3. In the mid-1970s, IDOT began a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for FA 407 from Peoria to Canton. The EIS process was not completed, and in 1979 the study was suspended.

The FA 407 corridor was also included in three feasibility studies for a highway connection between Chicago and Kansas City. These studies were:

- 1968, Chicago-Kansas City Highway Corridor – Recommended the State Authorities undertake financing studies and plans for the immediate construction of a Corridor Highway.
- 1974, Kansas City, Missouri to Chicago, Illinois, Route Feasibility Study – Determined a Kansas City to Chicago route was economically and environmentally feasible.
- 1990, Chicago/Kansas City Tollway Feasibility Study – Concluded a privately-owned and operated Chicago-Kansas City Tollway was feasible if: 1) Cost, travel demand, and growth are as assumed by the study, 2) State governments acquire right of way with revenues from local assessments, 3) Tollway rates are unregulated, and 4) Existing roads are incorporated into the privately-owned tollway.

In 1998, the 336 Coalition, a group of concerned citizens, business people, and local government representatives, was formed to promote the study and construction of a four-lane highway from Peoria to Macomb.

1.3 DESIGN CRITERIA USED AND HIGHWAY TYPES CONSIDERED

The IL 336 project will be analyzed using the current Bureau of Design and Environment Manual, 2002 Edition. All portions of the proposed roadway will be built, following the new construction standards outlined in the following chapters of the manual. Chapter 32 addresses horizontal alignment, and Chapter 33 covers vertical alignment. Both horizontal and vertical designs need to be worked together to provide a facility that is both safe and aesthetically pleasing to the motoring public. This study makes no recommendation on freeway vs. expressway; however, the design criteria used are applicable to both.